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Statement submitted by the Federation of Medium-sized Cities, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

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Statement

The Federation of Medium-sized Cities, which has special consultative status, welcomes the holding of the high-level segment from 7 to 11 July 2014 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. Medium-sized French towns (between 20,000 and 100,000 inhabitants) are very open to the world: the number of official twinnings is estimated at more than 500, many of them in "decentralized cooperation" projects. Our organization is intensely focused on themes relating to cooperation in development, and wishes to contribute to the debate on the future of the global development agenda by setting out the following priorities:

1. Emphasis should be placed on the role in cooperation of local communities, including small and medium-sized ones, because they can develop lasting relationships with local partners. Development aid generates goods and services in recipient countries;

2. The goal of cooperation should be to pinpoint the types of development, and especially economic development, that will benefit partner communities. All cooperation projects need to be based on a shared dialogue so that they will meet the needs identified by the beneficiaries. What must be promoted are partnerships based on reciprocity, trust between all those involved, and ongoing appraisal. Lasting cooperation must now be based on shared issues, and not a simple skills transfer. It is therefore crucial to support the philosophy of guidance;

3. The necessary basis of cooperation for development will be trust relationships between partners, involving the local people;

4. Communities involved in the projects need to upgrade their strategy. If they are really to receive sustainable help, the partnership must be a lasting one;

5. If adequate funding and logistical support are not forthcoming, in particular from States, it will be difficult for cooperation projects to last in the current period of financial crisis. Local authorities must also seek to develop cooperation with non-governmental organizations and commercial enterprises;

6. The United Nations and member States must take care that all levels of local authority can participate in cooperation for development projects in tandem with their local partner communities, with national and international co-financing not being limited just to the most financially important projects. All projects must be eligible for calls for proposals, on the sole condition of their effectiveness and their goodness of fit with the stated objectives;

7. It would seem useful to promote cooperation for development at all levels of government, and not just in major cities. In future, a development policy for the countryside and sub-metropolitan areas in assisted countries must not be neglected.